DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 777 HE 026 505

AUTHOR Bensimon, Estela Mara
TITLE Creating an Institutional Identity out of "Differences": A Case Study of Multicultural Organizational Change.
INSTITUTION National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, University Park, PA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Apr 93
CONTRACT R117G10037
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Reading and Learning Association (Kansas City, MO, April 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Change; Affirmative Action; Blacks; Case Studies; *Change Strategies; College Administration; College Faculty; Cultural Pluralism; Curriculum Development; *Diversity (Institutional); Females; Higher Education; Hispanic Americans; Leadership; Long Range Planning; *Organizational Change; *Organizational Climate; Organizational Objectives; Policy Formation; School Policy
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; Diversity (Faculty); *Diversity (Student); Latinos

ABSTRACT

This case study examines the efforts of one small private liberal arts college to exchange a monocultural organizational structure for one that is grounded in the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body. The paper is based on interviews with faculty, administrators, students, and trustees and provides a detailed description of organizational changes that have taken place at the college between 1987, when a new president took office, to the fall of 1991. Emphasis is placed on the aspects of organizational structure that assisted or hindered the development of the college's identity as a multiracial and multicultural campus. The study shows that the ongoing transformation of the college into a multicultural institution entailed: (1) a new mission statement; (2) the appointment of women and minorities to the president's cabinet; (3) the appointment of African Americans and Latinos to the faculty; and (4) multicultural curricular transformation. The paper concludes with a brief analysis of four organizational factors that facilitated the process of taking on a multiracial and multicultural identity. These are leadership, a state grant, institutional policies, and academic practices. Contains nine references. (GLR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED358727

CREATING AN INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY OUT OF 'DIFFERENCES': A CASE STUDY OF MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Estela Mara Bensimon

National Center for Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

The Pennsylvania State University
403 South Allen #104
University Park, PA 16801
(814) 865-8367

This paper was prepared with financial support from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) Grant R11761003. The opinions expressed herein do not reflect the position or policy of OERI, and or official endorsement should be inferred.

HE026505

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PROJECT NO.: R117G10037
CFDA NO.: 84.117G

INTRODUCTION

In this case study, I examine the efforts of a college to exchange an organizational structure that is monocultural for one that is grounded in the racial diversity of the student body. I am using the term organizational structure very broadly in reference to leadership, institutional practices, policies and patterns of culture and power.

I consider the changes made by Rosefield (a pseudonym) to take on a multiracial and multicultural identity. The paper is a detailed description of organizational changes that have taken place at Rosefield between 1987, when a new president took office, to the fall of 1991, when I spent three days interviewing faculty, administrators, students, and trustees as part of a national study of organizational change. I concentrate on aspects of organizational structure that assisted or hindered the development of Rosefield's identity as a multiracial and multicultural campus. The material in this section follows a standard form of case study reporting in that I rely solely on data from interviews and documents to describe changes in Rosefield's mission, curriculum, and people. I conclude the paper with a brief analysis of the case study framed by modernist and postmodernist theories of organizational change.

Rosefield's racial diversity: strength or weakness?

Rosefield College is a private liberal arts college with a student body that numbers approximately 1700. The college survives in spite of an insignificant endowment because the state in which it is located has a remarkably liberal policy on the use

of public funds to aid institutions in the private sector. The college's annual budget is about 14 million dollars, about one-third of which comes from the state, either in direct aid to the institution or in the form of tuition grants to needy students.

Rosefield's commitment to the less privileged dates back to the 1860's, when it was established as a second language institution for German and Hungarian immigrants who were unable to enroll in a neighboring and very prestigious university that is as rich as Rosefield is poor. The college assumed its multiracial character during the 1970's, when it experienced severe financial difficulties and began to recruit poor students who qualified for tuition aid from the State. A substantial amount of the college's income is obtained as a result of the poverty of its students. Eighty percent qualify for state tuition grants, which account for 2 to 3 million dollars of the college's annual budget.

Rosefield's most distinctive and most problematic characteristic is the diversity of the student body--racial, ethnic, and linguistic. About half of the students are African American, 44% are white, 5 to 10% are Latino/na, and the rest are from other groups, including foreign students. Asked what is special about Rosefield, an administrator replied:

> What is really important about this place is that it is multiracial. It is important because it is very visible. But what is more important is that it is the focal point of the college. Virtually every activity is directed toward cultivating, understanding, nurturing, encouraging, studying what it is like to live in a truly integrated community.

As one might expect, neither the faculty nor the administration mirror the diversity of the student body. Until

1990, Rosefield's minority faculty consisted of one Latino; there were no African Americans. Moreover, no minority group members held any significant administrative positions.

The town in which the college is situated is one of the few all-white enclaves in the immediate proximity of a large, virtually all-minority inner city that suffers from social and economic neglect. Even though it is just minutes away from a city teeming with members of every imaginable racial, linguistic, and ethnic group, the town, with its small old-fashioned stores and the diner where the locals congregate, remains much as it must have been in the 1950's, when Rosefield was an all-white college. The residents, a college administrator said, "live in fear of [their town] turning into a black city," which has been the fate of neighboring towns. Needless to say, for the townspeople, Rosefield, a college with more than 60% minority students, symbolizes what they fear most.

The most important consequences of Rosefield's racial diversity is that it has provided the impetus for institution-wide changes ranging from the mission statement to curricular transformation, to the implementation of affirmative action policies, and more generally, to the way people talk and argue about what it means to be a multiracial and multicultural institution.

The adoption of a multicultural mission

The president recalls having been "struck by the institution's discourse about the mission." He said, "No one named racial and cultural diversity when they spoke about the

institution. Instead, they talked about the mission in traditional ways, as serving first-generation students. This surprised me. Almost every institution in the country still has first-generation students, so that's not a particularly dynamic way to think about an institutional identity."

In fact the admissions staff was inclined to downplay the racial composition of the student body for fear that prospective white applicants would lose interest. However, the president considered Rosefield's racial diversity a unique and undervalued resource. "I felt that the way the institution talked about itself should be centered on its racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity."

Although the college began to define itself as a multiracial and multicultural campus only recently, no one claims that this is a new or radically different mission. Rather, it is presented as the recovery and renewal of Rosefield's founding purpose, which was to educate newly arrived European immigrants. Nevertheless, the college has changed dramatically in that western and eastern European immigrants have been replaced by the children of Puerto Rican and Southern black migrants now living in the inner cities nearby; and also by immigrants who have fled unbearable social, political, and economic circumstances in South and Central America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Asia.

In 1990-91, at the urging of the president, Rosefield adopted a brief statement acknowledging its multiracial and multicultural mission. Multiculturalism is represented in language that implies concern with instrumental as well as emancipatory aims. Accordingly, it first defines

multiculturalism from an instrumental perspective in terms of making students productive citizens:

> ...The mission of Rosefield College is to prepare students to function at the peak of their potential in a multiracial, multicultural society.

Second, it defines multiculturalism in connection with the empowerment of marginalized populations,

> ... particularly those who have traditionally been excluded from higher education, to realize their intellectual and personal goals...[and] to become empowered, active individuals engaged in renewing themselves, their relationships, their workplaces, and their communities (emphasis added).

Third, it defines multiculturalism in terms of the desirability of respecting and maintaining "differences" rather than eliminating them:

> ...We believe students must gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for other cultures and for the unique racial and cultural diversity of the United States.

Fourth, it defines multiculturalism (and differences) in terms of possibility and hope for a better society:

> One of the strengths of the College is the rich diversity of its students. The College is committed to this richness because it provides an ideal context for personal growth and a basis for a better society...

Rosefield's mission statement suggests a concept of multiculturalism that is far more complex than an instrumental strategy for managing diversity or a human relations strategy to achieve harmonious relationships among diverse people. Its language provides a view of multiculturalism that is centered on educating the marginalized and disempowered, thereby enabling them to become productive members of society, but it also reflects the need to transform society. The president said, "the word race is in the statement and not just culture because it is

a more scary term, and people don't want to talk about it." He elaborated on why it is important to mention race by saying, "Paulo Freire maintains that race is a dangerous word, and that is precisely why the mission is important--it's requiring us to talk about race and racism, which we need to do if we are ever to become a more just society."

The president's acknowledgement of the liberatory aspect of multiculturalism, particularly for oppressed populations, is not a widely shared interpretation of the mission. Instrumental interpretations of multiculturalism are far more prevalent. For example, a trustee's definition of "multiracial and multicultural" reflected corporate concerns about the changing composition of the workforce and U.S. competitiveness. He said, "Minorities are not as qualified for jobs as workers in countries like Japan, and we have to make sure we do not waste this potential." According to a Latino admininistrator, among the older faculty, the prevailing view of multiculturalism is that of preparing a diverse student body "to function effectively according to the corporate rules" whereas he subscribes to the notion "that cultural and racial differences should be a catalyst for changing the present Eurocentered culture and power structure."

Yearning for a shared meaning of multiculturalism

Many faculty old-timers complained that the president has not provided a clear definition for the multicultural mission. One professor said, "He can be very inspiring, and he is

excellent at helping faculty reflect on what learning really is and what teaching really is. I am sure he could do the same with us on what multiculturalism really is. But he has not done it and that makes me sad." The president responded, "We never reach a point where we have everything all pinned down. So the last thing I would do is to define what I mean by the term multiculturalism."

The persistent calls for greater clarity and a consensus about the meaning of the mission reflect the faculty's anxiety about the new direction of the college. There is an implicit fear of being intellectually displaced by the knowledge claims associated with multiculturalism. One professor put it as follows:

> The president is playing with fire by not identifying what multiculturalism is. He has to make it clear that it does not mean that we are going to replace a Eurocentric curriculum with one that is Afro-centric. All this confusion is very dangerous. If we let students think that we are going to provide them with cultural identity, then we will lose sight of the real purposes of a college education.

Faculty are concerned that "multiracial and multiculturalism" might be interpreted as a "radicalization" of the curriculum and the college. They are particularly wary of black students interpreting the mission in more exclusionary terms. One professor said,

> Black students have a different definition of "multicultural." White students see "multicultural" as reflecting the concerns of blacks only. We need to give more emphasis to the fact that multicultural means many, including Italian- and Irish-American, as well as Latino.

To some extent, faculty may be reacting defensively to being challenged by black students. For example, at a town meeting, a student asked, "How come the Autobiography of Malcom X is not a rite of passage for freshmen? Why isn't it one of the required books in the Freshman Core." A professor's response, that "faculty get bored with teaching the same book every year, so it was dropped from the reading list," gave the impression of indifference. From the student's viewpoint, this was an unjustifiable exclusion, considering that other "classic" works are taught year after year.

The meaning of multiracial and multicultural is not likely to be made any more absolute by a definition. Rather, it is created and recreated as people willingly rethink the taken-for-granted in the context of the mission. For example, in response to a question about what difference the mission makes in the dailiness of the institution, the vice president for academic affairs said, "We talk about hiring, about acquiring new books for the library, everything that we do on this campus is in relation to the mission." "No activity," she contented, "takes place without taking our mission into consideration...if we are planning, say, a co-curricular activity like a dance, the issue then becomes what kind of music should we have? And it should be an issue. The staff no longer unconsciously plan things as if we had a monolithic student body. In two weeks, we are having convocation, and we have planned it according to our mission so that the speakers, the programs, the people being honored all reflect the multiracial commitment of the college."

Among the several minority group members added to the faculty and administration in 1990-91, the concern is that unless there is a conscious reinterpretation of teaching and learning, the mission will remain little more than rhetoric. Even so, minority newcomers are optimistic about the viability of the mission. In part, this hopefulness stems from the realization that even though the more influential senior faculty are critical of the administration, they strongly support the college and its president, whom they consider the best president Rosefield has had. Moreover, though newcomers feel that "much of the faculty still needs to internalize the mission," they also recognize, as one newcomer observed, that "there is an honest effort among many white liberal people to deal with the reality of a changing student population."

Turning the rhetoric of the mission into multicultural practices

Admittedly, it is much simpler to change the wording of a statement than to redesign an institution. To implement the multicultural mission through tangible curricular and pedagogical practices, Rosefield had (and still has) to overcome significant obstacles. For one thing, the college did not have the necessary resources to implement the mission. The president acknowledged that it might appear disingenuous to espouse a "multiracial and multicultural" mission in an institution with an all-white infrastructure. A far more serious obstacle than the faculty's homogeneity was its size. With only 40 full-time faculty members, Rosefield is obliged to hire three times as many adjuncts to staff courses.

The president set himself a difficult task, as it was he who conceived Rosefield's new identity. Fortuitously, on the first day as president, he found on his desk an invitation from the State Commission of Higher Education to submit a proposal to enhance institutional excellence in teaching and learning. The grants program was the brainchild of a progressive governor as an incentive to stimulate innovative teaching and learning approaches among the less selective public and private institutions.

Rosefield's application, "Toward a Multicultural, Multiracial Society," much of which was written by the president, spelled out a comprehensive program of faculty and curricular development centered on the implementation of the refocused mission. The proposal framed multiculturalism in the context of race and racism, reflecting the president's concern that Rosefield not avoid the difficult and dangerous dialogues about race. The proposal also made it clear that the multicultural mission was not embraced out of naivete or enlightened self-interest for the purpose of attracting students:

> To begin with, our efforts are affected by the racism that still permeates this society and its institutions. Like other campuses, we have not been strangers to racial tensions nor do we expect to be in the future. With the largest percentage of Black undergraduates among the state's independent colleges, a college administered mainly by whites, whose faculty are mostly

white, located in a township fearful of becoming part of [NAME OF URBAN CITY WITH A PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY POPULATION], some tension is inevitable.

On the strength of the application, Rosefield received 1.8 million dollars, a substantial grant for a college that has an endowment of about 2 million dollars. A major portion of the state grant was used to establish a faculty and curricular development program that would "create opportunities for faculty to re-examine their fields from a multicultural, multiracial perspective." During the three years of the grant (it ended in 1992), 40 full- and part-time faculty participated in semester-long interdisciplinary seminars under the tutelage of a Preceptor-in-Residence. In the bimonthly seminars faculty met to discuss the scholarship of minority scholars and also to revise one of their courses by integrating gender, race, and ethnicity. The goals of the seminars were ambitious; for example, in one they consisted of the following:

--Familiarize faculty with new scholarship on race, ethnicity, gender and class, including disciplinary and interdisciplinary analysis;

--Acquaint faculty with the "first person" voices of multicultural and multiracial groups often excluded from the curriculum;

--Prepare faculty to explore and reconstruct their pedagogy to reflect the new perspectives;

--Assist faculty in transforming one course by suggesting resources for teaching about multicultural and multiracial groups; and

--Encourage faculty to discuss intellectual, social and demographic changes in higher education which affect disciplinary changes.

While these objectives may seem rather ordinary in light of the nationwide trend toward curricular transformation, they are very meaningful within the context of Rosefield College. Rosefield's approach to curricular transformation is common in wealthier and more prestigious institutions, but it is rare in colleges that, like Rosefield, do not have the expertise in Women Studies or Ethnic Studies to provide the foundation for curricular change. Second, Rosefield's program involved the majority of the full-time faculty exposing them to a body of scholarship with which they were unfamiliar. In most institutions, such projects usually involve a small number of faculty members who are already committed to multiculturalism. Third, what makes Rosefield's approach to curricular transformation unusual is that it involved some of the older and more influential faculty members, which was critical for the success of the program. Their participation helped to legitimize the program and provided the impetus for the involvement of more

skeptical faculty. Needless to say, the program could have easily been a failure if it had not gained the support of long-time faculty, such as the one professor who said,

> This new course I am teaching is invigorating. Without the grant, the mentor, and the seminar, I am not sure I would be doing it. In my field, most of the new and good stuff is about race, class, and gender. I feel a greater sense of excitement, being exposed to all this new scholarship. The "State Excellence Grant" helped to create that. Even if you were doing some of this stuff before the grant, you probably felt a little alone, and now there is a whole bubbling culture that is concerned with these questions.

Rosefield chose the route of revising existing courses rather than creating one or two new required core "diversity" courses because, as one academic administrator put it, "We wanted to avoid 'ghettoizing.' We did not want to only have special courses such as African American music or Hispanic art in America, we wanted a survey course on American Literature to include Hispanic American and African American literature."

The seminars created a spirit of collegiality and collaboration that stimulated candid discussions of teaching and learning. Faculty exchanged syllabi, ideas for assignments, and also gave demonstration classes. Another feature of the seminars was that participants chose partners to observe each other's course(s) and provide feedback. The seminars provided a

structure for involving faculty from different disciplines in a collective effort of multicultural curricular transformation, giving them a shared experience, something that even though critical for the success of multiculturalism is uncommon among faculty from traditional disciplines.

It is highly unlikely that Rosefield, or any other college for that matter, could provide "data" documenting how these seminars influence teaching effectiveness and student learning. There are no outcome indicators by which to judge whether faculty are now more likely to present students with the knowledge and values implied in Rosefield's multicultural mission. Neither is there any concrete evidence of the extent to which they have rewritten their courses or merely added some token material on race and gender.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the seminars made faculty more aware of the meaning of "differences" in relation to their teaching. The only two professors from management who participated were highly enthusiastic and spoke about changes they had made in their syllabi and assignments. A humanities professor said,

> The implications of what we read in the seminars for our classrooms and teaching are not always direct. A book like Browngirl, Brownstone, I am not sure I would be able to use it in my courses. But learning about this Jamaican girl makes you think about some of the people you meet in the classroom. It just makes you more appreciative of their viewpoint. And you can ask

them better questions when you get the chance to talk one-on-one. It's not that you read these books and you say 'Oh, I have an idea for my class.' It is more about changing the way faculty think.

Similarly, an academic administrator said,

> What we know from the seminar, from faculty reports and formal evaluations is that the faculty's teaching starts to change as they take the seminar. They talk about how they handle situations in class differently, how they work with students individually differently, how they have added materials and not wait until the entire course is revised. It affects all the courses they teach because in this seminars we talk about pedagogy.

Not all full-time faculty members have opted to participate in the seminars. Some expressed a great deal of skepticism, and one, who referred derogatorily to the "ethnicization" of the curriculum, felt that white students were dissatisfied with the infusion of multiculturalism into the curriculum:

> Students resent having to read and look at things from a multiracial and multicultural point of view. Some students feel that there are faculty members here who push the issue too much. There are certain readings that are required of freshmen--Alice Walker, I don't know who she or the other writers they are now talking about are--and they resent having to spend a whole

semester on that. One of the students told me that to get a good grade all they need to do is mention the M (Multiculturalism) Word.

Minority professionals were more skeptical about the impact of curricular change efforts. One said, "They don't buy into it yet. I don't get the feeling that they are living the mission. The majority still want to teach using the same methods they learned 10, 15, 20 years ago. They see they are different--their color is different, their language is different--but they can't adapt their styles to meet the needs of students." Another said, "It's more like an afterthought. In order to survive, the institution has to provide something the students need. So, there is some curricular accommodation, but I am not sure that people are thinking critically about how to educate students for a rapidly changing society. The knowledge that was good 20 or 30 years ago is still being transmitted to students."

Comments about the mission by two African American students were mostly negative: "They say one thing but do something else, it's all a bunch of crap." "All six required works of fiction were by white males." "We deal with issues like race and class, but it is through a Eurocentric perspective." Curiously, even though they were critical, both students felt they were getting a good education. One said, "For me, this is a good school. There are good teachers, and if they see you are trying, they help you." An Asian student who had transferred from a very large university was very positive. He said, "I love Rosefield, I feel comfortable here, it's a good place for minorities."

Diversifying Rosefield's faculty and administration

Until 1987, Rosefield had given short shrift to affirmative action, according to a senior professor: "For years we have had affirmative action, but nothing ever happened because faculty chose the traditional candidates." When the president assumed office, more than half of Rosefield's enrollment was African-American, but African-Americans were conspicuously absent from the faculty and administration positions.

By 1991, a number of personnel changes had taken place that gave Rosefield look more of the multiracial and multicultural identity espoused in the mission statement. The most dramatic changes were in the administration. In the president's cabinet, all the senior academic officers are now women (none minority); the vice president of student affairs was replaced by a black woman. And the president's executive assistant for strategic planning is a Puerto Rican man.

The desire for diversity in the administration is reflected by other appointments: a Puerto Rican woman for the newly created position of coordinator of English as a Second Language; a Cuban man as director of the library; and a Latino admissions recruiter.

The faculty's apprehension about the mission intensified when it became clear that it also meant that the president and vice president intended to adhere to a strict interpretation of affirmative action, and would not hesitate to enforce it even if doing so required intervention in faculty searches. As a result of these efforts three of five new faculty members appointed in

1991 were African-American. Three professors may not seem like much, but considering that until now there were no African-Americans in a full-time faculty of 40, these appointments demonstrate that administrative commitment is crucial to affirmative action policies.

Faculty acknowledge "that the moral thrust for affirmative action is coming from the administration." One senior professor said of the three African American professors, "I don't know if they would have been hired. I sort of doubt it. One may have been an exception because he is highly qualified."

Faculty say they are in support of the principle of affirmative action but object to the administration's methods of enforcement. It is not that they are adverse to having minority colleagues, but rather "that the effort, time, and inconvenience it takes to find 'qualified' minorities is overwhelming." "Yes," they say, "there is a need to increase minority faculty, but also there are other needs as important that cannot be ignored." Just as the faculty claim to support multiculturalism but claim to be confused about its meaning, they explain their attitude toward affirmative action in similar manner: "It's not that we are against it, but just that we don't understand the procedures."

Fear of affirmative action has produced resentment toward the vice president for academic affairs. Because she has aborted searches that failed to produce a minority candidate among the finalists, she has been accused of usurping faculty prerogatives. She defended her actions by stating that the best candidate for

the position would be hired and added "but I cannot make that determination if the final pool does not have minority candidates."

On behalf of the senior faculty, while they feel resentment toward the vice president, they concede that "Without her intervention, we would be whiter than we are." One said, "If the faculty doesn't take the responsibility for initiating change and give up the privilege of alienation and cynicism, then the administration will do our work." "The result will be more and more power for the administration, not because they are power hungry but because they are the change agents and we are not."

Although faculty object to the administration's intrusion into the hiring process, the benefits of having minority colleagues are not lost on them. Speaking about a class that is team-taught by several faculty members, one of whom is a newly appointed African-American professor, a professor said:

> This is the first time that I can really see how much it matters to have a minority faculty member in front of 100 students in the lecture hall. His presence and the way students listen to him and the respect they show for him has made me realize the importance of having role models for the students.

"This realization," he said, "had a dramatic impact on me", making him rethink the hiring process. "If one of the candidates is a minority who will be a role model, he should be given priority, but I don't think we have internalized that yet...we

tend to make judgements on purely academic criteria... We need to raise the consciousness of the faculty"

Similarly, an African American professor saw himself as advancing the institution's mission by being a role model for white and minority students. "It makes white students think, 'Maybe they are competent at what they do. Maybe they are not so different from us.' And if they are from an ethnic group they will think, 'Well maybe I can do this one day. Maybe there are opportunities for me.'"

The invisible barrier: institutionalized racism

Although mission statements such as Rosefield's are of great significance in that they symbolize institutional commitment to multiculturalism, their power lies in the extent to which they can be a force for altering an institution's "design for living." The effectiveness of mission statements ultimately lies in their ability to bring about the exchange of monocultural for multicultural values. While Rosefield has taken important steps toward the institutionalization of the multicultural mission, monocultural values take the form of institutionalized racism.

Institutionalized racism is an inexorable barrier to multiculturalism because in being embedded in the values, norms, relationships, power, and decision-making structures of the dominant group, it is visible only to the "outsiders" within Rosefield. Institutionalized racism is expressed in a variety of ways, as in the unconscious tendency to be more welcoming of minority persons who have been successfully socialized to "mainstream" cultural norms of society in general, and the

academy in particular. Individuals whose racial, cultural, or linguistic "differences" were not conspicuous reported feeling they had been welcomed warmly and generously. They also appeared to be more fully integrated into the inner circles than those who were distinctly marked as outsiders.

The president appears more conscious of the difference between "diversity" that reinforces the status quo and "diversity" that transforms it. In a rather unusual and risky move, he appointed as his executive assistant of strategic planning the least likely candidate, a Puerto Rican man with a degree in theology and a professional background in grassroots community organizing. This "community activist" who for most of his professional life has been an advocate for poor Latino and African-American people brings a different voice to the discourse of multiculturalism. For him, multiculturalism has to do not only with diversity of viewpoints or celebrations of cultural differences but also with the struggles of marginalized people for power and social justice. Needless to say, he has a different experience and interpretation of multiculturalism, which at times is likely to disrupt the smooth operation of the president's administrative cabinet. The president, however, welcomes this: "I wish I would have had someone like him three years ago." "He brings a new perspective, not only a new perspective on race, but on learning and teaching. He can raise questions that I have never thought of before and challenges us in a way that is invigorating."

The president's action has not been widely replicated. Clearly, as long as the subconscious preference for the "norm"

remains undiscussed, instilling multicultural values in the faculty and administration will not be a priority. This is a drawback, because it implies that individuals whose curriculum vitae identify them as unorthodox scholars (e.g., feminists, critical theorists) and pedagogues may be overlooked in favor of candidates who, although they are members of minority groups, subscribe to Western European constructions of universal knowledge, objectivity, scientific methodology, etc.

The subconscious turn to sameness is, as one might expect, more perceptible to the minority newcomers, who sense a certain precariousness as to their role and status in the institution. In describing the first days on the job, one minority person said,

> I was left in a small office without a secretary...feeling not part of the group, not belonging. I was not asked to participate in meetings. Although I was [TITLE OF POSITION], I was not given any validity. When [NAME OF ANOTHER MINORITY NEWCOMER] was hired, I felt a real joy that someone else like me was coming because I felt very alone. This individual took an interest in my program; before, nobody had asked me how I fit in.

Some newcomers also felt excluded from the academic inner circle that oversees the several multicultural initiatives started with the state "excellence grant." The academic inner circle consists of individuals who are extraordinarily

entrepreneurial and innovative; moreover, they are the architects of the multicultural curricular transformation effort, the minority scholars-in-residence program, and many other programs that have advanced the multicultural mission. Also, they have been successful in getting additional funds to institutionalize the programs after the "state excellence grant" runs out. While the talents and honest commitment of these individuals were readily acknowledged, there was no evidence that the knowledge of minority newcomers was sought or taken into account, nor was there any indication of an ongoing dialogue about the nature of the programs that involved minority voices. I can speculate on some of the more obvious reasons for the limited involvement of minorities in the substance of the multicultural programs. One possibility is that the culture of academic organizations is not supportive of cross-unit or cross-disciplinary cooperation, even in a small college like Rosefield. Another is that a sense of ownership may preclude the "inner circle" from sharing power with individuals who reflect realities that are alien to Rosefield's academic community. The reasons for the non-involvement of minorities notwithstanding, the incongruity of having a multicultural mission that is defined by white administrators and faculty shows just how very unyielding monocultural values can be in the construction of reality, even in an institution that is genuinely committed to change and willing to experiment with new forms of being.

Institutional racism is pervasive in North American organizations, so its existence at Rosefield is, as one might say, natural. However, what is different about Rosefield is that

it is being discussed. For example, at a strategic planning retreat that involved the administration and trustees, the group identified "small degree of unconscious institutionalized racism" as an institutional weakness impinging on the success of the mission. There is also an awareness of the consequences of institutional racism in how Rosefield is portrayed externally by the admissions personnel. The president said, "There is an assumption that a multiracial community will be more attractive to blacks and Hispanics than to whites." Consequently, "The admissions staff has spoken more candidly about our diversity to African-American and Hispanic students than they have to white students, and they need to stop doing that. It is not right. I need to raise the consciousness of the admissions staff about what we are trying to do. There is an ambivalence among whites to talk about race, as if it were a dirty subject."

At the time of my visit, it was too soon to determine the impact of discussions on institutionalized racism. Clearly, this was a topic that caused discomfort and ambivalence. However, unless Rosefield addresses the inadvertent marginalization of minority newcomers, their exemplary efforts could dissipate in another instance of institutional paternalism.

Discussion and conclusion

In sum, the ongoing transformation of Rosefield into a multicultural institution entailed a comprehensive effort involving substantive organizational changes: (1) a new mission statement; (2) the appointment of women and minorities to the president's cabinet; (3) the appointment of African-Americans and

Latinos to the faculty; and (4) multicultural curricular transformation. Undoubtedly, there are numerous obstacles to Rosefield's transformation into a multicultural institution ranging from overt and covert resistance, the small number of full-time faculty, the limited presence of minority group members in leadership positions, and also burn-out among the long-time faculty. However, at the risk of romanticization, I believe that the case of Rosefield is more instructive in terms of what makes organizational change possible. Therefore, I will turn now to a brief discussion of four organizational factors--leadership, the state, institutional policies, and academic practices--that facilitated the process of taking on a multiracial and multicultural identity. By no means are these the only factors. For example, Rosefield's ethos as a teaching institution and the fact that there are weekly "salons" in which faculty gather to discuss such subjects as "Do we expect less from black students?" also contribute to a culture that is receptive to organizational changes centered on the improvement of teaching and learning.

Leadership was one organizational characteristic that was crucial to Rosefield's transformation. The president in particular, but also other members of his cabinet, took actions that turned the rhetoric of the mission into very specific organizational changes.

The state's $1.8 million excellence initiative grant was an external influence of major consequences in that it gave Rosefield the start-up money for its transformation. What was unique about Rosefield's grant application was the proposed initiatives. Instead of being stand-alone innovations that could

be easily dismantled after the funds run out, these initiatives were aimed at changes that would have an impact on the faculty and therefore were more likely to effect permanent, institution-wide change. Thus, for Rosefield, the state grant became an important vehicle for converting the rhetoric of the mission into multicultural teaching practices among the faculty. This is an important point, because other institutions that applied for funding did not attempt to change the institutional core as did Rosefield.

The enforcement of affirmative action policies was also critical in legitimizing the mission. The entry of African Americans and Latinos/nas also increased the possibility that multiculturalism might also be shaped from the standpoint of individuals whose knowledge and understandings have been shaped by existences at the margins of the academy (Hill Collins, 1986; Harding, 1991; hooks, 1989). The opportunity newcomers offer to define multiculturalism from the standpoint of "difference" has yet to be seized by the Rosefield community, with the exception of the president.

Changing the curriculum by revising existing courses rather than taking the more common ad-hoc approach (e.g., requiring all students to take one or two "diversity" designated courses) was also a critical decision. While it is unlikely that senior faculty have completely revamped their courses from the standpoint of race, gender, class, or other "differences," what seems important is that participation in the interdisciplinary seminars exposed them to the writings of African-American,

Latino, and Asian-American authors that were previously unknown to them and now might be more likely to appear in their reading lists.

To understand more fully the case of Rosefield, I turn to modernist and postmodernist theories of organizational change. Modernist understandings of organizational change focus on the management of planned change, stressing rational, linear, and stage-like processes (Blackler, 1992; Levine, 1980). When change strategies are shaped by a rational understanding of organizations, the inclination is to stay close to the status quo, keeping decision-making and power structures intact (Blackler, 1992). A modernist approach to multiculturalism would be based on the premise that diversity is a problem that threatens to disunite the organization and therefore has to be managed. The adoption of general education "diversity requirements" exemplifies a modernist strategy (Bensimon, 1992).

In contrast, postmodern understandings of organizational change focus on the creation of change out of differences, inconsistencies, and dissensus (Blackler, 1992; Tierney and Bensimon, forthcoming). When change strategies are shaped by a postmodernist view of organizations, the inclination is to experiment with new forms of organization, structures, and practices (Blackler, 1992). A postmodernist approach to multiculturalism would be based on the premise that diversity represents an organizational resource (Hill, 1991).

A postmodern view of organizational change can be useful in interpreting several key aspects in Rosefield's transformation. Racial diversity, which previously had been regarded as a

disadvantage, was turned into the driving force for Rosefield's transformation. The curriculum, hiring practices, planning, co-curricular activities--in sum, every aspect of the college--was centered on racial and cultural diversity. The deliberate effort to recruit African-American and Latino/na faculty and professionals, some of whom espouse philosophies of multiculturalism that are different from the status quo, showed that the administration, if not the faculty, was willing to "open organizational doors to alien realities" (Gergen, 1992, p. 223) even though it might disrupt "normal" organizational life.

Where the administration of Rosefield has done considerably less well is in providing the means for the voices of minority newcomers to be heard and integrated into the ongoing work of defining the meaning and practices of multiculturalism. Thus, while Rosefield has taken important steps toward diversifying the faculty and administration, these individuals will have limited impact if the decision-making power remains concentrated among members of the dominant group.

Writing on the philosophical and organizational issues of multiculturalism, Patrick Hill makes the following observation,

> Marginalization will be perpetuated, in other words, if new voices and perspectives are added while the priorities and core of the organization remain unchanged. Marginalization ends when conversations of respect begin when the curriculum is reconceived to be unimplementable without the central participation of the currently excluded and marginalized. (1991, p. 45)

If we look at where Rosefield stands in terms of this statement, several conclusions are possible. First, with regard to the "priorities of the core," there are several indications that in the upper echelons of the administration--namely, the president and vice president for academic affairs--priorities have changes. The most concrete evidence of this is the firmness with which affirmative action has been implemented.

However, without the concomitant commitment of the faculty, administrative support for the mission is not sufficient to bring an end to marginalization. At the faculty level, priorities appear unchanged in that there has been an unwillingness to provide the moral and educational leadership to hire minority group members. On the other hand, the fact that some of the long-time faculty have come to believe that having minority faculty does make a difference for minority and white students and that they are willing to participate in the multicultural faculty development seminars are hopeful signs.

REFERENCES

Bensimon, Estela M. (1992). "The Normalization of Diversity: Multicultural Curricular Change at Urban University." Unpublished paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco.

Blackler, Frank. (1992). "Formative Contexts and Activity Systems: Postmodern Approaches to the Management of Change." In M. Reed and M. Hughes (Eds.), Rethinking Organization. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Gergen, Kenneth J. (1992). "Organization Theory in the Postmodern Era." In M. Reed and M. Hughes (Eds.), Rethinking Organization. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Harding, Sandra. (1991). Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Hill Collins, Patricia. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." Social Problems, Vol. 33, No. 6, pp. S14-S32.

Hill, Patrick (1991). Multi-Culturalism The Crucial Philosophical and Organizational Issues. Revision, "Knowledge< Diversity, and Human Solidarity," Volume 23, #4.

hooks, bell. (1989). Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Levine, Arthur. (1980). Why Innovation Fails. Albany: SUNY Press.

Tierney, William G. and Estela M. Bensimon. (Forthcoming). "Diversity in Academe: Cultural Strategies for Change." In R. Menges & M. Weimer (Eds.) Better Teaching and Learning in College: Using Research Findings to Improve Practice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.